sat there, reading a newspaper. This may seem an unusual occupation for a woman of her environment; but she was an unusual woman.

"Mother," cried Oliver, "I just had a letter from Coolidge. He's over on the other side, driving an ambulance. Tucker and Perry are in the Foreign Legion. Everybody's over there. I'm going too. Do you mind?"

His mother looked at him. She was indeed unusual; a woman of brains, fine sensibilities, ambitious for her son— But let us not dwell on these things. She was looking full at Oliver, and I should like to keep tragedy out of this as much as possible.

"You want to—to drive an ambulance?" she asked.

"Better than that," glowed Oliver. "I can get into an aviation corps. Ben says it will be easy."

His mother did not speak for a moment. She had not been one of those bored by the war; she had read daily of the French, of French mothers. At that instant she thought that her son might have felt the heat of the flames, and while her heart sank in terror, there was a thrill of exultation too. Poor lady!

"On the French side?" she asked.

"Naturally," said Oliver. "All the fellows are on that side: Coolidge and Perry and—"

Then she knew. It was not that Oliver had felt the heat of the flames, not that he had seen and recognized heroism and suffering—it was nothing at all save that he had found a new game to play. But was it not possible that, once he gained that bloody theater, something might happen, some great light break— It will be seen that Oliver's mother was also an optimist.

"Oh, Oliver," she said, "I shall be unhappy to have you go. But if you feel you must—"

"I'll be all right," Oliver assured her. "Don't you worry. I'll be careful."

Later in the day he told one other in Boston of his intention. This was Agatha Price, the girl the entire Back Bay, including Agatha herself, was patiently waiting for him to marry. Oliver was taking her for a drive in his car at the time.

"I'm glad you're going to do something for France," she said. "Everybody is—it's quite the thing this winter. Florence Enwright is going over as a nurse. I rather wish that I—surely I know as much about nursing the wounded as Florence does."

Oliver made no reply. He had a selfish little feeling that he wanted this thing to himself; Agatha had no right to interfere. So the girl made no more reference to her own ambitions. She said that she hoped Oliver would come out all right, and wasn't it a beautiful day for December?

ABOUT a week later Oliver took a midnight train for New York. The good-by scene with his mother, which he had rather dreaded, passed off splendidly. She was quite matter-of-fact and calm; even smiling when he left her in the hall. There was an odd light in her eyes.

Oliver carried a letter from the French Ambassador practically promising him a commission. Influential friends had secured it for him. The Ambassador had been somewhat bewildered; he had been given the feeling, subtly, that France was honored by this condescension from a Winterslip. But he had been touched too, and he had agreed, by mail. He had not seen Oliver.

On the day following his arrival in New York, Oliver was booked to sail on a French liner.

He would have sailed, too, if he had not run into Maurice Martin, sleepy-eyed from society. Maurice had been one of that exclusive club in Cambridge—the club of the giddy hat-bands and the Saturday nights devoted to champagne. Maurice said Oliver simply must stay over a week.

"Costume ball at the Plaza," he explained. "Benefit French midinettes. I'm going as Sir Galahad." He reached for his highball. "It's for France, you know," he added.

Oliver was quick to see that he could serve the stricken by canceling his passage, so he arranged to sail a week later.

In the meantime he hung round the club, a hero in prospect. There was a martial spirit in the air. Talk was all of artillery, ammunition, our woeful lack of preparedness. Young men gazed fiercely into the future.

The gorgeous evening of the ball arrived. Oliver had been puzzled as to his costume, but he finally hit on the happy idea of going as Sir Galahad. He felt that Martin could not object; the knight was public property.

As it turned out, Oliver was the hit of the evening. Not only was he a Winterslip: he was a Winterslip about to fly for France.

The next day, at noon, he stood on the deck of the French liner and watched his hopelessly plebeian and totally unprepared country fade into the January mist. At last he was on his way toward the advertised thrill.

There is no intention to relate here, as in a diary, Oliver's trip over, his adventures at the front. Stirring as some of those adventures were, it is Oliver himself who forbids—good old Oliver, unimaginative, uninteresting, colorless, But now and again, reader, you and I will steal up softly, and, opening the door, we will glance into Oliver's mind. Then we will close the door and steal away. When our courage returns, we will creep up again—

THE initial adventure of this sort impends. After dinner that first evening on the boat, Oliver encountered near the rail a young Harvard man whom he had seen in New York, and who was going over for work in the ambulance corps. The young man was not of Oliver's crowd; their meeting was an accident. His name was Carter, or some such thing.

"I hear you're to be in the aviation corps," the boy said. "Gad—what a chance! I wish I had it. They're wonderful, aren't they?"

"Who?" yawned Oliver.

"Who? The French. What a fight they've made!" And Carter walked excitedly back and forth on the moonlit deck. "No complaints—no kicks—just gone out and died. Talk about efficiency—that's efficiency with the heart behind it. I'm proud to live in the same world with them."

"Really?" said Oliver.

"Did you read about Fère-Champenoise—how they died there?"

"Really—I—" Oliver stared with disapproval at this disgracefully emotional young man.

"Go as far as you can, and stick there—that was the order they got. And they did. Whole regiments dead on the field—dead like gentlemen, with their bodies between the enemy and Paris."

"Never heard of it," said Oliver.

"You're fighting for something when you fight for them," blazed Carter. "Lord, I envy you! I'll be back of the lines myself—back there picking up wounded—well, I can tell my kids about that, anyway."

He came close.

"Do you know," he said, "I threw up a good job to come over here. I'll be broke when this is over. And proud of it."

Oliver yawned again.

"Beg pardon," he said. "Up until five G. M.—dancing, you know. Can't stand this society life. Ho-hum—think I'll turn in."

NEXT, the grand reunion. Oliver in Paris, dining with Coolidge and the crowd.

"I knew you'd come," said Coolidge. "As soon as we got into it, I said to myself: 'This would be meat and drink for Oliver.'"

"Thanks for the letter," said Oliver. "Mighty kind of you. It's great to see you all again—great to be here."

"What about back home?" asked Coolidge. "Are they getting ready?"

"Not at all," Oliver told him.

"They make me sick," said Coolidge. "It'll come, I tell you. And then—"

Shortly to their table came a member of their set at home who was yet not like them—Warren, a cool, serious youth, head of a division of the ambulance.

"Oliver!" he cried. "You here?"

"Why not?" inquired Oliver, annoyed.

"Oh—no reason, I suppose," said Warren. "But—how did you happen to come?"

"Why—Coolidge wrote me a letter—"

"Exactly. By the way, Ben—Wilmot was hit by a shell today. They don't think he'll pull through."

"Wilmot—never heard of him," said Coolidge.

"No?" Warren stared at him gravely. "A fine chap."

"Poor fellow," said one of the others.

"If he goes," said Warren, "at least he'll know what he died for. By the way, Oliver—see that bunch of correspondents over there? The one with the glasses is here to get material for fiction. You ought to meet him."

"Why?" inquired Oliver blankly.

"Oh—I don't know; but he's having a mighty good time."

"Have a drink," suggested Coolidge.

"No, thanks," said Warren, and walked away.

"Seems a bit on his ear," puzzled Oliver. "Always was odd. By Jove—there's Helen Ferris."

They greeted Miss Ferris. She was of a very haughty New York family—they all knew her. Over to nurse soldiers, she told them. A Red Cross heroine—flushed and excited and happy.

"I've just been assigned to a hospital," she said. "Go out to-morrow. I'm to work under Lady Trevor. I can hardly wait to begin."

ON the following night Oliver dutifully went to the Ritz to dine with his uncle, Percy Winterslip. Uncle Percy was a large, red-faced, commanding man who had lived in England for many years. He was bursting with indignation.

"Had to get out of London," he raged. "Couldn't stand it. What is the Administration thinking of?"

"I don't know," answered Oliver.

"I fancy you don't," said Uncle Percy. "I fancy nobody does. When England entered the war—that was our cue. Neutral—bah!"

He took a drink to steady himself.

"And our course as the war ran on—inexplicable. I wonder, Oliver, if the people at home realize the embarrassment we Americans on this side have been caused. Hang it—I can't go into my clubs in London any more. I'm a member of three—and I can't go into any of them. Not that anybody says anything, of course—but they imply. They imply, and I have to blush for my country. There's an election coming over home—I should like to have a talk with the voters."

He stared with popping eyes into space.

"I'm sorry, of course," said Oliver. "It's all rather a scandal among the best people in Boston and New York."

"Ah, Oliver," said his uncle, "your coming over here has helped. That's the sort of thing that has cheered us. By the way, I contributed three cars to the ambulance corps. If you happen to run across them you might let me know if they're proving useful. I can send more of the same make if they're holding up."

"But how will I know which are yours?" Oliver asked.

"My name's on them," glowed Uncle Percy. "Each car has a plate with the donor's name. A splendid idea—"

After dinner his uncle went to the hotel door with Oliver. He swore because there was no taxicab to be had.

"Why stop at the Ritz," he demanded loudly of the porter, "if the ordinary comforts are denied one?"

"No matter, uncle," said Oliver. "I'll walk."

"Good night," said Uncle Percy. "Good luck, my boy. I haven't been home in ten years. But, by the Lord Harry, if this thing keeps up, I'll go back next election to cast my vote."

Oliver walked to his hotel. He suddenly felt that he must lose no more time in getting at the enemy—for Uncle Percy's sake. But he had a vague feeling that he would serve Uncle Percy better if he flew over Washington and dropped bombs on the White House.

AT the big aviation camp just outside of Paris, they were unwinding the red tape, clearing away the difficulties, to the end that Oliver might fly for France. The delay annoyed him. Despite some jolly parties with his friends, Paris was getting on his nerves. It was horribly quiet—and so many women in black. And children—this frightful habit of putting mourning on children—it was not fair to onlookers: so depressing. Uncle Percy had said the same thing.

Finally Oliver was admitted to membership in an aviation corps. For a time he was tried out cautiously. Assigned to the defense of Paris, he flew only in the neighborhood of that city. Then he was sent down to the trenches, and allowed to take part in the work of directing the fire of the big French guns.

It was during this period that he chanced to be, one evening, at a hospital base where one of the ambulance squads

"He knew his duty, and he did it. He fired and brought the German down."